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SUBJECT: MARCH 24 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: DPRK MISSILES, AMCITS IN DPRK,
USNS IMPECCABLE, SCO AFGHAN MEETING

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11. Key points at the March 24 MFA press briefing:

-- China is "very concerned about the situation on the Korean Peninsula," and "hopes that all parties will be restrained and calm so as not to complicate the situation."

-- Regarding the U.S. citizens detained by North Korea, Qin said that "the male American citizen involved has left China and two females are not in China."

-- The "latest statements by the U.S. side" regarding the South China Sea "reverse black and white" (diandao heibai).

-- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting to be held in Moscow on March 27 will focus on Afghanistan terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime.

North Korea Missile Launch

12. Referring to the planned DPRK missile launch, spokesperson Qin Gang said at the regularly-scheduled March 24 MFA press briefing that China hopes "all parties will be restrained and calm so as not to complicate the situation." The most important thing is "a peaceful, stable and denuclearized Korean Peninsula." South Korean Six-Party Talks Head of Delegation Wi Sung-lac will visit China to meet with Chinese VFM Wu Dawei to "exchange views on the Six-Party Talks and the situation on the Korean Peninsula." The spokesperson had "no information" on a reported invitation to President Hu Jintao to visit North Korea.

Americans on the DPRK Border

13. Asked about the U.S. citizens detained by North Korea, Qin said that "the male American citizen involved has left China and two females are not in China." Qin referred questions to "relevant countries."

South China Sea Dispute

14. The "latest statements by the U.S. side" regarding the South China Sea "reverse black and white" (diandao heibai), said Qin. China is "determined to protect its sovereignty" and "hopes that the U.S. side will take appropriate actions to prevent future occurrences" similar to the recent incident. China also hopes that relevant countries will abide by the "declaration of conduct" in the South China Sea.

Meetings on Afghanistan

¶ 15. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting to be held in Moscow on March 27 will have a special focus on Afghanistan terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime, said Qin. China will "elaborate on its positions" and "make suggestions" during the conference. China will "not send troops outside of its borders" unless on a UN peace keeping mission. VFM Song Tao will attend the conference in Moscow while VFM Wu Dawei will attend a separate conference on Afghanistan at the Hague on March 31.

Dalai Lama's Visit to South Africa

¶ 16. China "appreciates the measures of relevant countries" said Qin when asked about South Africa's reported rejection of a visa for the Dalai Lama. China "opposes other countries' official contact with the Dalai Lama or their providing him a platform for separatism." The Dalai Lama is "not a religious figure but a political exile" whose "true colors are known around the world" said Qin.

Internet Censorship

¶ 17. The spokesman was "unsure" whether video sharing website Youtube has been blocked in China, but said that "China manages the Internet according to law." The Chinese government is "not afraid of the Internet" said Qin, noting that China has more than 300 million Internet users. China learned to restrict the Internet "from the UK and United States." Qin pointed to U.S. laws "passed in the 1990s to prevent the spread of harmful information and protect children" as well as to the "Patriot Act which allows the government to monitor" what is said on the Internet.

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Death Penalty in China

¶ 18. Asked about a recent Amnesty International report on the death penalty in China, Qin said that "competent authorities have stated China's position on the death penalty many times." Qin noted that he is "only a civil servant."

China Navy Celebrations

¶ 19. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the founding the PLA Navy and Chinese authorities will "plan a ceremony to celebrate," said Qin. Qin referred more specific questions to "relevant authorities."

Peru-China Relations

¶ 10. China and Peru are "maintaining communication" regarding a possible future visit of a Peruvian leader to China. China wants to continue to discuss free trade with Peru which "is good for both countries." China also "attaches great importance" to relations with Peru and would like to maintain high level exchanges.

Visit of Australian FM

¶ 11. Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith will visit China and exchange views with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and other Chinese leaders, said Qin. China and Australia are two "important countries" in the region and bilateral relations between the two will "contribute to regional peace and stability."

Tiananmen Massacre

¶ 12. "There has already been a conclusion" reached regarding the "incident of 20 years ago" said Qin when asked to comment on the reported disappearance of a soldier involved in the Tiananmen

massacre. Qin said he had no information about the soldier.

Remains of Chinese Soldiers in Papua New Guinea

¶13. China "attaches great importance" to the recovery of remains of Chinese soldiers in Papua New Guinea and has "already begun preparations" to deal with the situation.

PICCUTA